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The Mountain View 1992 General Plan

City of Mountain View, California

Superseded sections!

A Comprehensive Revision of the 1982 Mountain View General Plan

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Residential Neighborhoods

Chapter

INTRODUCTION

Mountain View is its neighborhoods. The City's housing policies and programs are based on preserving and protecting its neighborhoods and finding ways to meet community and regional housing needs at the same time. The City recognizes that in order to achieve a specific goal, other goals may not be fully carried out. This is especially true with housing goals since there is little suitable land for housing and an enormous demand for it, created by a large number of jobs in northern Santa Clara County.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first three deal with Housing and the last one deals with Neighborhoods. The Housing sections look at the overall community need for quantity and variety of housing, at housing opportunity for groups with special needs, and at housing quality. The Neighborhoods section deals with residential neighborhoods as a whole and with the quality of life and the character that makes Mountain View distinct from other communities and a desirable place to live.

The following three sections on Housing are taken from the Housing Element adopted by the Mountain View City Council on October 16, 1990. The California Department of Housing and Community Development informed the City on January 18, 1991, that the element complied with State law, including the requirements pertaining to affordable rental units that are at risk of being converted to market rent. This chapter contains a condensation of that official Housing Element. There is a complete version in the Technical Appendix. Policies and Actions have been renumbered to follow the format of the rest of the General Plan.

Housing affects every aspect of community life. It satisfies the need for basic shelter; it establishes the look and feel of neighborhoods; it affects the composition of the population. The kind and amount of housing that is built has enormous influence over the quality of life, not only in Mountain View but on the mid-Peninsula. Without a diversity of housing, available where it is

needed, streets and highways become overloaded as workers commute long distances to their jobs. In turn, the overall economy is hurt as employers find they must pay higher wages to attract a labor force that lives far away and expects to be paid for the time and expenses of commuting.

This Plan recommends keeping areas already zoned for multiple units and rezoning up to 525 additional acres for a wide range of housing types, including multiple-family housing. (See Figure 6.) The Plan retains mobile homes as an important part of affordable housing by designating "exclusive use" areas for mobile home parks.

Accomplishments

Mountain View has made significant strides in carrying out the policies of the 1982 General Plan. Among the accomplishments are:

- Construction of 2,430 housing units. "Affordable" housing accounted for 569 of those.
- Production of affordable housing ranked Mountain View eleventh of 106 Bay Area cities in this category.
- Rezoning of 370 acres for 5,600 additional housing units.
- Addition of City programs to inspect multiple-family rental housing.
- Addition of City programs offering home repair for lower-income homeowners, rental mediation, and neighborhood mediation.
- Adoption of vehicle and storage ordinances and City support of neighborhood organizations, clean-up efforts, and studies.
- Participation by the City in a County program for people who earn moderate incomes and are buying their first houses.

HOUSING QUANTITY AND VARIETY

The City is committed to maintaining a range of housing types to meet the housing needs of all Mountain View residents. To do this, the supply of rental apartments must be preserved and increased; the supply of mobile home park rental spaces must be preserved; and higher-value housing and infill development are encouraged.

Housing Distribution and Condition

Owners live in 34 percent of the housing in Mountain View; renters live in the other 66 percent. As of 1990, 45 percent of the housing units were apartments, 30 percent were single-family detached houses, 16 percent were townhouses or condominiums, 5 percent were duplexes, and 4 percent were mobile homes. About one-third of the single-family detached houses were rented, 40 percent of the units in condominium or townhouse projects were rentals, and 45 percent of apartment buildings that were converted to condominiums were rented. Mountain View has a special zoning district for mobile home parks and has nine parks with a total of 1,175 housing units.

Vacancy Rates. Housing vacancy rates are very low in Mountain View. When the vacancy rate drops below 5 percent, the market is considered tight and housing prices and rents are driven up. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has established a regional goal of 4.5 percent. Mountain View's vacancy rate for multiple-family units was 0.8 percent in 1984, 2 percent in 1988, 4 percent in 1989, and 3.1 percent in 1990.

Existing Housing Projections. The Association of Bay Area Governments estimates the current and projected regional need for housing and assigns a share of it to each city. When it makes these estimates, ABAG takes into account the market demand, employment opportunities, the availability of suitable building sites and public facilities, community patterns, and whether people own or rent their units. The estimate is limited, or constrained, by the zoning and available land in each city. Based on these constraints, ABAG estimates that Mountain View will grow at a rate of 190 units a year. Figure 3 shows growth to 33,080 households in the sphere of influence at a rate of 190 units a year through 2005. Mountain View's sphere of influence includes half of Moffett Naval Air Station. The sphere of influence includes the probable future physical boundaries of the city as determined by the county's Local Agency Formation Commission.

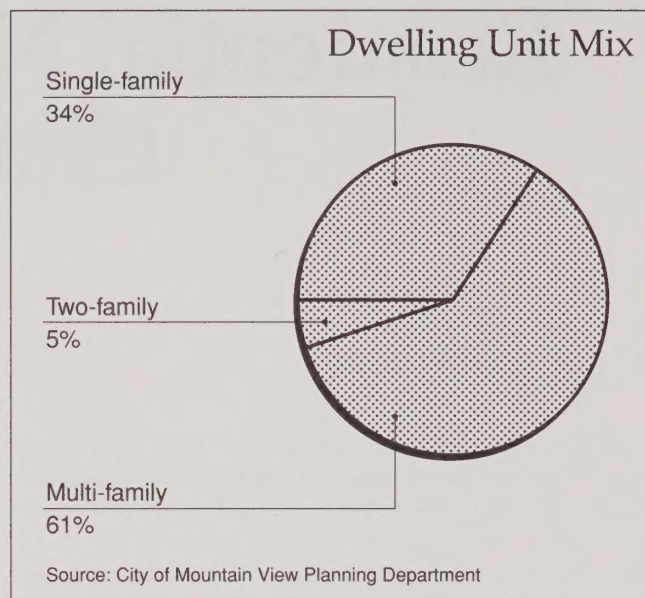


Figure 1. Dwelling Unit Types as Percent of Total.

Housing Type History

Unit Type	1960	1970	1980	1990
Single-family	7,424	9,094	10,176	10,806
Two-family	507	1,341	1,487	1,628
Multi-family	2,366	12,402	16,721	19,293
Total	10,297	22,837	28,384	31,727

Source: City of Mountain View Building Permit Records and U.S. Census, 1980. Single-family includes mobile home units.

Figure 2. Housing Units by Type, 1960 – 1990.

Housing Growth

Year	Occupied Dwelling Units	Households	10-Year Increase
1960	10,297		—
1970	22,837		12,540 122%
1980	28,383		5,546 24%
1990	30,259		1,875 7%
1995		31,720	
2000		32,660	2,400 8%
2005		33,080	

Source: Occupied Dwelling Units, U.S. Census; Households, ABAG, "Projections '90."

Figure 3. Housing Growth and Projections, 1960 – 2005.

Provide a range of housing including single-family, townhouses, apartments, and other housing types.

Share of Region's Housing Needs. When ABAG made unconstrained housing needs estimates, not limited by the zoning and available land in each city in 1989, it found that Mountain View needed 3,295 new units between January 1988 and January 1995, an average of 470 new units a year.

ABAG bases its determination of housing need on a model that considers the number of units needed to achieve an "ideal" vacancy rate of 4.5 percent, the growth projections for the city based on its existing plans, and a regional goal of supplying housing for half the anticipated job growth between 1988 and 1995. Managing the balance between jobs and housing is also discussed in the Community Development Chapter, in the Housing and Jobs section.

The proposed rate of 470 new housing units a year is much higher than the average rate of 190 units a year from 1982 to 1990, but the proposed rate of 470 was exceeded four times during the 1980s. This is Mountain View's "Fair Share" of the regional need and is consistent with Mountain View's housing commitments to the Golden Triangle Task Force.

Mountain View has a higher percentage of lower-income households than the county and the region, so, according to ABAG's method of assigning housing need, the City's housing needs percentages are lower for low-income households and higher for households earning above-moderate incomes compared to the percentages for the same categories in neighboring cities.

Housing Need

Income Group and Relation to County Median	Seven-Year Projected Need	
Very Low Income (0–50%)	659	(20%)
Low Income (50–80%)	560	(17%)
Moderate Income (80–120%)	725	(22%)
Above Moderate (over 120%)	1,351	(41%)
Total	3,295	(100%)

Source: ABAG, "Housing Needs Determinations," January, 1989, Tables 10, 18, and 26.

Figure 4. Housing Need, January 8, 1988 – April 1, 1995.



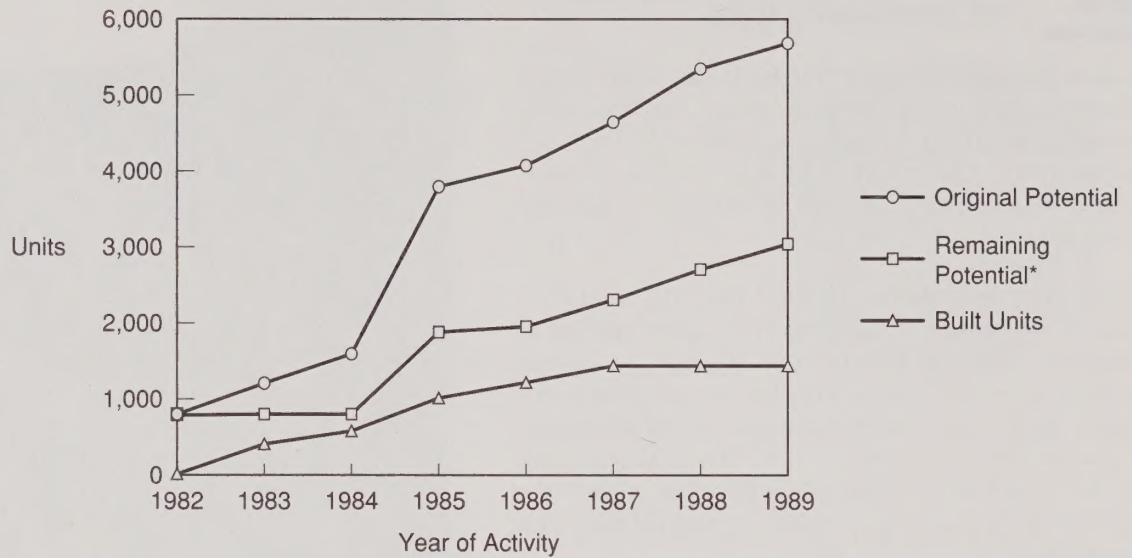
Vacant site on San Luis Avenue available for infill housing.

Policy 1. Ensure that adequate residential land is available to accommodate the new construction and sites needed to meet ABAG's Fair Share Housing Needs as described in Figure 4, at left.

Action 1.a Encourage the construction of an average of 470 housing units a year over the 15-year life of the General Plan.

The City analyzed vacant or under-utilized residential lands and vacant, older, or underdeveloped commercial lands to see if they are suitable for housing. There is more than enough vacant land in Mountain View for the housing needed by low-income and moderate-income households. However, some of this land inevitably will be used for housing for higher-income families. At the same time, other land that is not now zoned for residential use will be rezoned and will become part of the inventory of vacant land. Mountain View considers all residential sites potential sites for below-market-rate housing. This housing can be built by local government or by private developers, with or without federal subsidies.

Annual Change in Residential Zoning Capacity, 1982-1989



* Remaining Potential is the difference between "Potential Units" and "Built Units" and also assumes a maximum of 400 units Downtown, 50 units on Moffett Blvd., and 500 units for the C3 Rezoning Program (El Camino Real).

Specific Zoning Changes and Cumulative Total

Year	Rezoning or Precise Plan	Acres	Potential Units	Units Built	Cumulative Remaining Potential
1982	220 - 278 Monroe Dr., Ortega - El Camino PP	17.16	798	0	798
1983	Bryant - Bowers Ave., Villa - Mariposa PP	26.67	409	386	821
1984	Cuernavaca, Castro Gateway PP	30.00	386	171	774
1985	Grant Rd. - Sleeper Ave, Moffett Blvd., C3 Rezoning**, Moore PP, Eagle Sq. PP, Central Castro PP, El Monte - El Camino	207.06	2,202	433	1,893
1986	San Ramon PP, 2100 California PP, 394 Ortega PP	12.15	279	205	1,967
1987	Mora - Ortega PP, California - Ortega PP	20.30	572	220	2,319
1988	Downtown**	48.37	700	0	2,719
1989	Eunice Ave., Clark - Marich PP	8.63	337	0	3,056
Total		370.34	5,683	1,415	3,056

** The Castro Gateway, C3 Rezoning and the Downtown Precise Plan are primarily commercial zones, but allow high density housing as a conditional use. Existing commercial development will slow the addition of new housing units in these areas, or may reduce Remaining Potential.

Figure 5. Change in Residential Zoning Capacities, 1982 - 1989.

Action 1.b Conduct and publish a periodic inventory of available land and its holding capacity to be sure that there is enough land to meet the needs of a range of household types.

The City will maintain an up-to-date inventory, adding land as it is rezoned to residential and subtracting land as it is developed, and will periodically assess whether the city has enough land, appropriately zoned, for the production of low-income and moderate-income housing.

Vacant Sites and Potential Redevelopment

Does Mountain View have enough land suitable for housing to accommodate a range of housing for all income groups, or will rezoning be necessary? This depends both on how much land is zoned for housing and what housing densities will be allowed.

GOAL
B Provide affordable housing in a number of locations, in a variety of house types and prices, for purchase and for rent.

Ninety-seven percent of the residentially zoned land in Mountain View is already fully developed. In 1989, there were about 120 vacant residentially zoned acres. Based on 1990 zoning, these parcels could hold from 1,020 to 3,671 units. If property is developed at 90 percent of its maximum allowed density, Mountain View would meet ABAG's Fair Share allocation. From 1980 to 1990, development has occurred at an average of 75 percent of maximum density, so some additional land will need to be rezoned for housing.

Policy 2. Encourage housing on vacant infill residential land.

Action 2.a Promote infill development of vacant residential land.

The City can promote infill development by providing information about where infill land exists, by providing up-to-date and easily accessible information about the status and availability of utilities and other facilities that serve development, and by making environmental data files available to simplify and speed up the review and approval process for infill developments.

Rezoning. Most infill sites are already designated for higher densities and will not require rezoning. About



Industrial site on Ortega Ave. can be redeveloped with housing.

7,100 units can be built on potential residential redevelopment sites in Mountain View (see Figure 6), greatly exceeding the number needed to meet ABAG's projections. Rezoning will be desirable in some cases.

Policy 3. Encourage a mix of housing types, including higher-density and lower-density housing.

Action 3.a Review and amend the zoning map to provide land in a range of residential zoning classifications appropriate to meet new housing construction needs.

Amendments to the zoning map will be made only if consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map and will require separate environmental review.

Action 3.b Identify sites for possible rezoning to 12 or more units per acre for residential development on a table in the General Plan and on the zoning map.

The sites are shown in Figure 6. The Zoning Ordinance and map will be amended to conform with the General Plan, but those amendments will require separate environmental review.

See also the Community Development Chapter, under the section Coordinating Land Use and Transportation, for actions encouraging higher density housing around rail stations.

Potential Housing Sites

Area Description	Land Area (Acres)	1991 Zoning	Potential Zoning	Potential Units/ Acre	Potential Units	Housing Element Action*	General Plan Action*
1) Del Medio Ct. (Sears Warehouse)	4	MM	R3-2.2	18	72	Redevelop for housing	Initiate rezoning
2) Mayfield Ave. and Central Expressway	4	PC-Office	R3-3	12	48	Long range alternative	Study General Plan amend. to housing
3) Old Mill Site (Showers Dr.)	18	PC - Comm.	PC-Resid.	35	720	Redevelop for housing	Initiate zoning amendment
4) Polaris and Gemini Aves.	7	ML	R3-2	21	147	Long range alternative	Study General Plan amend. to housing
5) Shoreline Blvd, so. of Middlefield	3	PC-Indus.	R3-2	20	60	Redevelop for housing	Initiate rezoning
6) Fairchild Dr. and Ellis St.	126	ML	R3-2	20	2,520	Long range alternative	Consider housing and industry
7) Evelyn Ave./ Moorpark Way	17	PC - indus.	R3-1.5	25	425	Long range alternative	Study General Plan amend. to housing
8) Evelyn Ave./Villa St.	17	C G	R3-2.5	15	255	Redevelop for housing	Initiate rezoning
9) Downtown	48	PC-Mixed	PC-Mixed	15	400**	Redevelop for housing	Promote housing
10) El Camino commercial strip	150	C3	C3	40	500	Redevelop for housing	Initiate zone amendment
11) SE Corner El Camino and El Monte	6	PC-Mixed	PC-Mixed	25	150	Redevelop for housing	Initiate zone amendment
D) Leghorn/ Independence West	41	MM-40	R3-2.2	18	738	Long range alternative	Drop from General Plan
D) Leghorn/ Independence East	18	MM-40	R3-2.2	18	320	Long range alternative	Drop from General Plan
D) Plymouth/Sierra Vista	23	MM-40	R3-2.2	18	414	Long range alternative	Drop from General Plan
D) Terra Bella/Linda Vista	43	MM	R1	6	258	Long range alternative	Drop from General Plan
D) Easy St and Central Expressway	2	ML	R3-3	12	24	Redevelop for housing	Drop from General Plan
NC) Greenhouse at Marilyn Ave.	6	A	R1	5	30	Redevelop for housing	GP - housing, A zoning
NC) SE corner Grant Rd. and Levin Ave.	15	Pre R1-8L	R1-8L	4	60	Redevelop for housing	GP show housing
Totals	548				7,141		

* Housing Element Actions are the recommendations from the 1990 Housing Element to investigate adding capacity for housing through General Plan land use amendments and rezonings. These investigations were made while the rest of the General Plan was prepared. The final actions as included in the Community Development Chapter are listed under General Plan Actions.

** Does not include 370 units already built and occupied

D: Drop from further consideration in General Plan.

NC: No change from existing Low Density Land Use in General plan.

Figure 6. Potential Residential Redevelopment Sites.

Single-family Development. Single-family housing covers a broad range of sizes and costs. Mountain View offers several zones and zoning standards to accommodate this variety of housing types. Overall, however, Mountain View has fewer single-family housing opportunities than is usual in the area. Additional opportunities for both starter and executive homes should be pursued. The limited availability of undeveloped land and the high cost of redeveloping already-occupied land will require innovative approaches to producing single-family housing in a competitive housing market.

Single-family houses on small lots in the duplex and multiple-family zones will be somewhat less expensive than they would be if Mountain View did not promote ownership housing on lots smaller than the minimum normally allowed under R-1 zoning. Mountain View also has many substandard lots. Some are only 25 feet wide and are smaller than 3,500 square feet. The City allows houses to be built on substandard lots and has granted variances to the requirements for yards and setbacks.

Policy 4. Encourage the development of new single-family houses.

Action 4.a Prepare guidelines for the development of single-family houses on small lots, and continue to approve small lot sizes that meet the guidelines.

Action 4.b Identify sites for possible rezoning to one to eight units per acre for residential development on a table in the General Plan and on the zoning map.

The sites are shown in Figure 6. Those areas identified for further study will be examined for development at a variety of densities, including single-family densities. The Zoning Ordinance and map will be amended to conform with the General Plan, but those amendments will require separate environmental review.

Condominiums. Sixty percent of Mountain View's housing is in multiple-family buildings. Most of these units are rentals; many are ownership units, called condominiums. Both kinds provide much of the city's affordable housing. State law allows owners of rental apartments to convert them to condominiums. The City, however, does not want to see its supply of rental apartments depleted, and in 1979 it adopted a policy and ordinance to regulate these conversions. Mountain View allows owners of apartment buildings to convert their buildings to condominiums when a majority of tenants agrees to the conversion or when it will not reduce the total apartments below a base of 15,373. This is the number of apartments

in the city when the condominium conversion ordinance went into effect.

Policy 5. Provide guidelines and standards for the conversion of existing structures to condominiums.

Action 5.a Continue to regulate condominium conversions by ordinance.

Mobile Homes and Manufactured Housing

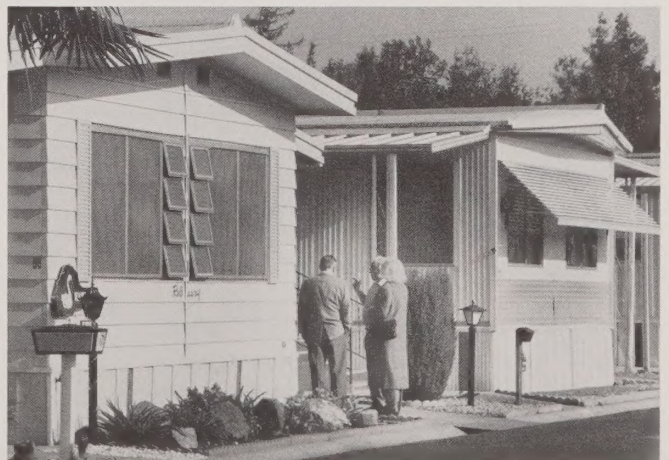
Mobile homes and manufactured housing units are a form of single-family housing that can fit either into a single-family neighborhood or into a mobile home park. When they are part of a single-family neighborhood, it is important to treat these units architecturally so that they blend in with the neighborhood. When they are part of a mobile home park, these units can create their own neighborhood style. The six major parks in Mountain View are active neighborhoods with their own strong sense of identity.

G O A L

C

Allow modular housing and maintain mobile home parks.

Mobile Home Parks. Mobile home parks are a unique kind of neighborhood. They provide affordable housing in a safe and secure environment with low yard and house maintenance. As a result, mobile home parks attract many retired residents. Mobile home owners enjoy the lifestyle and the social benefits of living in a close-knit neighborhood. The parks are also distinctive because the land and the units are owned by different parties. This separate ownership carries with it the risk of conversion of the land to another use and the loss of this special living arrangement.



Mobile home park on Sylvan Avenue.

Policy 6. Preserve the six major mobile home parks as a vital part of housing opportunities in the community.

Action 6.a Designate Mobile Home Park as a separate residential land use category on the Land Use Map of the General Plan.

Action 6.b Require a conversion impact report before approving a park conversion.

The State requires a conversion impact report with applications for park conversions. The report must include an assessment of the effects on residents who are displaced when the park is converted.

Action 6.c Require appropriate measures to lessen the adverse effects of park conversions on displaced mobile home park residents.

Mitigation measures may include payment of the costs to relocate the mobile home or purchase of the mobile home at its fair market value.

Manufactured Housing. Individual manufactured housing units, which are also called mobile homes, are allowed in any single-family zone, subject to Site Plan and Architectural Review. The review is to make sure that the manufactured housing is compatible with the neighborhood in height, bulk, and character. Any structure that meets building requirements, is mounted on a permanent foundation, and is architecturally compatible with the neighborhood is permitted in residentially zoned districts. For example, manufactured housing has been permitted on infill lots in the Castro City neighborhood. Mountain View has allowed modular and mobile housing on permanent foundations in residential areas under zoning established in 1981.

Policy 7. Assure the construction of safe and attractive mobile and modular housing.

Action 7.a Encourage mobile and manufactured housing that is safe and attractive.

Mountain View's Zoning Ordinance allows mobile and manufactured housing in all residential zones as required by State law. This allows maximum flexibility in how a dwelling unit is constructed, while the design standards in the Zoning Ordinance help ensure that these dwellings are compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Action 7.b Maintain Zoning Ordinance design requirements and criteria for modular housing and mobile homes.

Projected Need for New Construction

Population Trends. Mountain View's population grew from 58,655 in 1980 to 67,460 in 1990, an increase of 8,805. It is expected to grow to 69,400 by 1995, to 71,500 by 2000, and to 72,200 by 2005.

The average age of Mountain View's population increased between 1970 and 1980. There were fewer young people (those under age 19) and more older people (those over 55) in 1980 than in 1970. Younger adults, age 20 to 34, continued to be the largest segment of the population. The population of middle-age adults, those from 35 to 54, was at its largest in 1975 and decreased in 1980. People 35 and up showed a substantial increase in 1990, reflecting the general aging of the Bay Area population. This aging will affect the kind of housing that will be in demand.

The number of people in a household is not expected to change much between 1990 and 2005. Average household size was 2.14 persons in Mountain View in 1990 compared to 2.72 in Santa Clara County. Household sizes are declining in the county, but ABAG expects that Mountain View household size will drop only to 2.11 in 2005.

About 40 percent of Mountain View households were married couples according to the 1980 census; 37 percent were single people, 18.9 percent of the singles were men and 18.5 percent were women; 12 percent were households with unrelated individuals; and 11 percent were single-parent households, with 8 percent headed by women and 3 percent headed by men.

According to the 1990 census, Mountain View's population is 73 percent white, 15 percent of Asian origin, 5 per-

Population Growth

Year	Population	10-Year Increase	
1960	30,889	—	—
1970	54,132	23,243	75%
1980	58,655	4,523	8%
1990	67,460	8,805	15%
1995	69,400		
2000	71,500	4,040	6%
2005	72,200		

Source: 1960–1990, U.S. Census; and 1995–2005, ABAG, "Projections '90."

Figure 7. Population Growth and Projections, 1960 - 2005.

cent black, and 7 percent of various other racial groups. Those of Hispanic culture, who come from various racial groups, make up 16 percent of Mountain View's population.

Employment Trends. Employment in Mountain View went up by 15 percent from 59,279 jobs in 1980 to 68,040 in 1990. Service-related jobs grew the fastest. Along with jobs in manufacturing and wholesaling, service jobs will be the largest employment sectors in the future. The number of jobs in Mountain View may increase to 79,340 by 2005, and the city will need housing for an increasingly diverse population.

The General Plan's housing programs are designed to encourage affordable housing for families and market-rate housing for managers and professionals. Mountain View will require housing impact studies for new businesses that locate in the city and generate a large number of jobs. These businesses may be asked to help provide housing their employees can afford.

Policy 8. Review large-scale commercial and industrial development proposals to determine whether they create a demand for housing.

Action 8.a Estimate the effect on housing caused by commercial and industrial developments that require Environmental Impact Reports or are covered by State Congestion Management Plan legislation, and prepare plans to mitigate the effects of major commercial and industrial developments on housing.

This program is called "linkage" and is in effect, with variations, in several northern California cities, including Palo Alto and San Francisco. In those cities, new, large employers pay a one-time fee of several dollars per square foot of commercial or industrial floor space that is built. The money goes to a housing trust fund to be used to help developers of affordable housing. The Congestion Management Plan, among other things, requires a trip reduction and travel demand element, which in turn requires improvements in the balance between jobs and housing.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Housing is considered affordable when renters or buyers pay less than 30 percent of their gross monthly income for rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and, in the case of renters, utilities. The City's extensive rental

stock provides relatively low-cost housing for families and individuals. There were 398 assisted family housing units and 492 assisted senior units in Mountain View in mid-1991. Mountain View's nine mobile home parks contain 1,175 relatively low cost housing units.

Development of affordable housing is a basic goal of national, state, and local governments. Families earning moderate incomes and above-moderate income can usually buy housing on the private market. Special efforts are needed to develop housing that families earning low and very-low incomes can afford.

G O A L

D

Preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing.

Public and Private Resources

Mountain View will make the most of available programs and financial resources by combining them to the degree possible. For example, Mountain View has made CDBG funds available to help non-profit developers and could make the funds available to for-profit developers in return for reserving a portion of their units for lower-income households.

Policy 9. Make efforts to stimulate private financing and continue to pursue governmental programs that provide housing assistance and financial incentives for housing developments.

Action 9.a Use the 20 percent set-aside for affordable housing through the Mountain View Revitalization Authority and the redevelopment plan to encourage the construction or improvement of affordable housing or both.

Action 9.b Continue to contact non-profit housing developers to help identify appropriate sites and to encourage the development of affordable housing and housing for the elderly.

Action 9.c Use readily available methods, such as developer agreements, to encourage a full range of housing types, including affordable units for buyers and renters.

Under State law, the City must pass an enabling ordinance before it can enter into formal developer agreements. If this particular method is used to carry out this Action, this enabling ordinance will need to be a priority activity.

Action 9.d Apply annually for State, federal, and other housing assistance programs, including Community Development Block Grant funds, through the Mountain View Planning Department.

Action 9.e Spend at least half of the City's CDBG funds for housing purposes, principally to benefit lower-income households.

Housing Costs, Incomes, and Ability to Pay

Housing costs skyrocketed between 1970 and 1990 because of higher construction costs, scarcity of land, and increasing demand. Household incomes have been going up gradually, but they haven't kept up with booming housing costs. Household income is the total available income expressed in current dollars, and includes the income of family members and unrelated individuals who live in the same dwelling. The costs of owning a house have outpaced rents, which leveled out between 1982 and 1990. The inexorable demand for housing on the Peninsula and in the South Bay was the greatest factor in this rapid rise, although the change in Mountain View's community character from blue collar to white collar also pushed prices up. This trend will continue, according to

long-range projections. All this means that lower-income families are priced out of buying houses and are left to rent or to commute increasingly long distances to less expensive housing outside the county.

Housing costs rise and fall with demand and mortgage interest rates. The average cost of owning a house in Mountain View is about 3 percent less than the county average.

Except for studio apartments, rents are 10 to 15 percent lower than rents in Palo Alto, but 2.5 to 11 percent higher than rents in Sunnyvale. One-bedroom apartment rents in Mountain View are 1.5 percent below the county average.

Households earning below-average incomes find it extremely difficult to find affordable housing in Mountain View. The 1980 Census showed that 78 percent of all low-income households, including 27 percent of low-income homeowners, paid more than 25 percent of their incomes for housing. Median income in Santa Clara County was \$54,000 for a family of four in 1990; \$57,700 in 1991. Very low-income households earn less than half the median income; they could afford to rent only a studio or one-bedroom apartment and have the most limited choice. Low-income households earn between 51 and 80 percent



Subsidized family housing built in the 1970s.

of median; they could afford a two-bedroom unit. Moderate-income households earn between 80 and 120 percent of median; only they and households that earn even more could afford to rent the average three-bedroom apartment in Mountain View. (See Figures 9 and 11.)

Policy 10. Pursue County, State, and federal programs that enhance housing opportunities for lower-income and moderate-income households.

Action 10.a Apply for Community Development Block Grant subsidies to assist in developing affordable housing, and leverage these funds.

Policy 11. Ensure that publicly subsidized below-market-rate units are preserved as affordable—even upon change of ownership.

Action 11.a Use non-profit corporations and the County Housing Authority to acquire and lease below-market-rate housing for lower-income and moderate-income households, ensure that qualified occupants are placed in the houses, preserve affordability, and perform other activities.

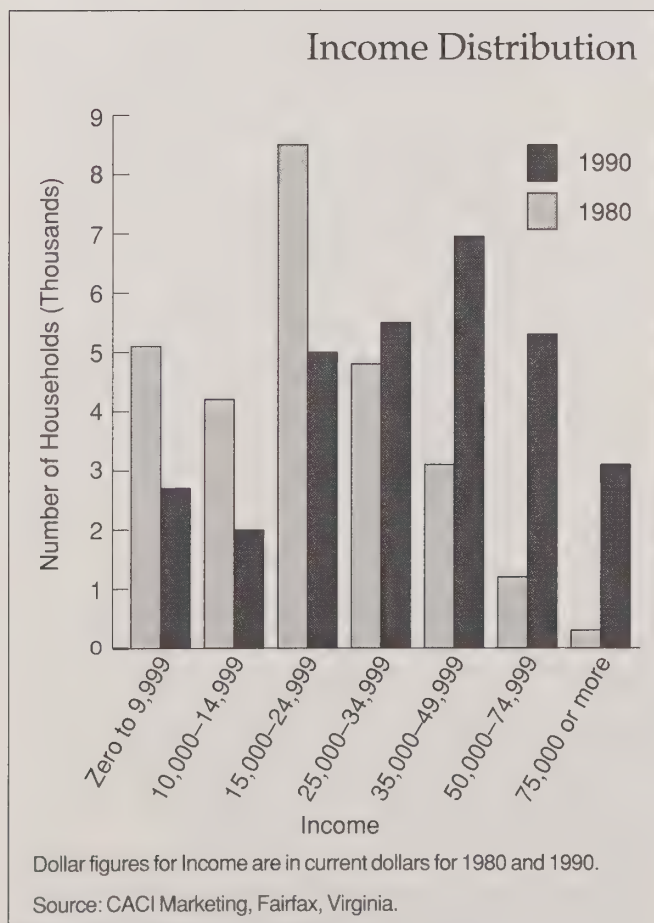


Figure 8. Income Distribution, 1980 and 1990.

Both the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition and the Housing Authority have experience in developing and acquiring housing, qualifying tenants, and assuring that the units are reserved for qualified tenants and occupied by them.

Policy 12. Ensure that occupants of publicly subsidized below-market-rate units meet the income restrictions of the development.

Action 12.a Continue to participate in and promote the Section 8 Existing Housing Program.

Section 8 Housing Program

The County Housing Authority operates the federal Section 8 program in Mountain View. Section 8 has two parts, certificates and vouchers.

Section 8 certificate holders rent from apartment developments that have Section 8 contracts with the Housing Authority. The certificate holders are not permitted to pay more than 30 percent of their incomes toward rent. The federal government, through the Housing Authority, pays the apartment owner the difference between what the tenant can pay and the fair market rent as determined by HUD.

Section 8 voucher holders may rent from any willing property owner. The property owner must agree to contract with the Housing Authority to receive the federal rent subsidy. Property owners may charge more than fair market rent to voucher holders, but the Housing Authority still pays the same subsidy. The subsidy payment is the difference between the Fair Market Rent and 30 percent of the tenant's gross income. That means that renters who hold vouchers may end up paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for rent, but certificate holders will not.

Household Income	
Relation to Median	Percent, 1980
Very Low Income (below 50%)	20%
Low Income (50% to 80%)	20%
Moderate Income (80% to 120%)	25%
Above Moderate Income (120% & above)	35%
Source: ABAG, "Housing Needs Determination," January 1989, Table C-6, page 89.	

Figure 9. Household Income Distribution.

New Housing Opportunities

GOAL

E

Provide housing opportunities and promote the development of safe, sanitary, and desirable housing for people of all economic levels.

Many people can afford to own homes in Mountain View only because they bought them a long time ago and have very low, fixed-rate mortgages or even own their houses outright. A low income family that moves to Mountain View can afford to buy only the lowest-priced units, typically one in an apartment building that has been converted to condominiums. Only a family that earns more than moderate income can afford the average-price townhouse. Very few families can afford a single-family detached house, the most expensive housing in the city.

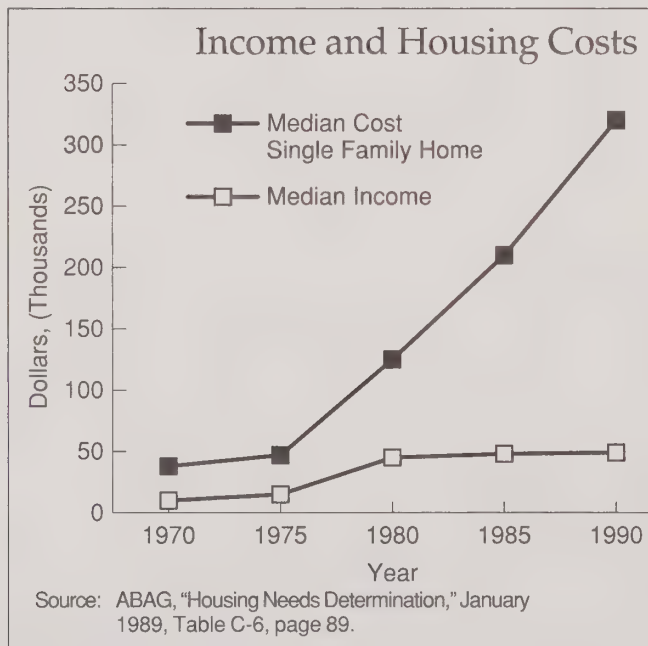


Figure 10. Income and Housing Cost Trends, 1970 – 1990.

Policy 13. Support the development of reasonably priced and innovative housing.

Action 13.a Examine Zoning Ordinance provisions for the development of second dwelling units, and amend or amplify them as warranted.

The City will assure continued compliance with State law on second dwelling units. Mountain View needs to review the Zoning Ordinance provisions for second units because very few second units have been built. There may be many reasons for this; one possibility is that the Zoning Ordinance inadvertently discourages building these units. The City will determine if it can change the Zoning Ordinance to increase the number of second units being built.

Action 13.b Revise the Zoning Ordinance to establish a 25 percent density bonus and award concessions and incentives to residential developments that set aside 20 percent of their units as housing for lower-income households, or 10 percent for very-low income households, or 50 percent for the elderly.

A density bonus allows a developer to build more units on the property than would normally be allowed under zoning regulations. California law requires that density bonuses and other concessions and incentives make a real difference in the economic feasibility of constructing housing for lower-income families and the elderly. The State requires cities to adopt an ordinance specifying the method of offering these incentives along with procedures for seeing if developers are complying with the ordinance. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to accommodate density bonuses will require separate environmental review.

Affordable Rents

Relation to Median	Income in 1991		Affordable Rent*
Household at or below 50%	\$28,850	(Very Low Income)	\$ 721
Household at or below 80%	46,160	(Low Income)	1,154
Household at or below 100%	57,700	(Median Income)	1,143
Household at or below 120%	69,240	(Moderate Income)	1,731

* Rent equals 30 percent of gross income

Figure 11. Affordable Rents in Mountain View.

Action 13.c Consider whether to encourage single-room-occupancy hotels in Mountain View and consider whether to finance them. If the decision is made to do either, consider how to accomplish this.

Single Room Occupancy Hotels

There are two single-room-occupancy hotels in Mountain View, the Maas Hotel and the Mountain View Hotel. Their 83 rooms are an important part of the city's affordable housing. They offer relatively low rent and small units to people who often cannot come up with a large enough sum to cover the first and last month's rent and security deposit typically required to rent an apartment. Hotel room rents ranged from \$108 to \$150 a week in 1990. People who live in these hotels include seniors, the unemployed, the working poor, and those who find themselves periodically without permanent shelter. The City will need to write guidelines for identifying sites that are compatible with surrounding land uses and are near jobs, public transportation, and community services.

Subsidized Units at Risk. Five apartment complexes in Mountain View, containing 369 units that are subsidized by the federal government for low income families, are at risk of reverting to market-rate rents when subsidies or other governmental rent restrictions run out between 1991 and 2008.

These complexes were built starting in the 1960s with low-interest loans and rent subsidies from the federal government. In return for the loans and subsidies, owners and developers agreed to build or operate rental projects in which most or all of the units were reserved for low-income families during the term of the loan, typically 40 years. To encourage participation in the programs, the federal government allowed owners and developers to end their contracts before the loan period ended. As they end their contracts, they can start charging market-rate rents. When that happens, there will be fewer rental units available to lower-income families, and the families who live there will be displaced.

Other apartments were built without insurance from the Federal Housing Administration but relied on mortgage revenue bonds for financial assistance. The terms of the bonds required that 20 percent of the units be reserved for households earning less than 80 percent of the county median income, for 10 years or half the life of the bonds, whichever is longer.

The five apartment complexes in Mountain View that are at risk of reverting to market-rate rents include two that benefited from Federal Housing Administration insurance, two with FHA insurance that also receive Section 8

rent subsidies, and one financed through mortgage revenue bonds. The HUD Section 8 rent-subsidy program is one of the main sources of federal housing assistance for low income households. Non-profit housing corporations own two other projects that received government help, but those projects are assumed not to be at risk for conversion to market-rate rents.

One hundred of these units need to be preserved or replaced between 1992 and 1997. The cost to replace them would be high. Replacement cost would be \$26 million at a minimum, based on an estimated unit cost of \$260,000 for the land and construction. Between 1997 and 2002, another 120 units would need to be preserved. Replacing them would cost more than \$31 million. Another 149 units would lose their Section 8 rent subsidies but would keep their FHA insurance and rent restrictions.

Preserving the at-risk units by buying them would cost one-fifth as much as building new ones. This is because the units were built at a lower cost than is possible today on land that cost much less than it would today. Mountain View helped the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition with Community Development Block Grants to acquire 56 units at an average cost of \$53,000 a unit in 1990. The City contributed \$200,000 to the total purchase price of \$2,968,000.

The value of the subsidized units increases as time runs out for federal affordability requirements. That means public agencies should help non-profit corporations sooner than later. Some federal programs, for example, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, have been valuable in helping non-profit corporations acquire at-risk units. However, the programs have never been made permanent and have always had automatic termination dates.

Policy 14. Promote and assist the preservation of "at-risk" affordable housing.

Action 14.a Provide loans and grants for equity financing of at-risk affordable housing by non-profit housing corporations.

Action 14.b Urge Congress and the President to make permanent the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and Mortgage Revenue Bond programs.

The City's Housing Element was adopted with an action program to "consider adopting a local preservation ordinance" to protect units at risk. Since then, the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act was enacted. It precludes cities from adopting local preservation ordinances for federally subsidized housing.

Public Employees. It is important to the quality of life in Mountain View that public employees be able to afford to live here, but City and school employees have a diffi-

cult time finding housing in Mountain View that they can afford. Only the highest-paid firefighters, police officers, and teachers could afford the average monthly mortgage for the least expensive one-third of the city's housing in 1990.

Most City and school workers can afford to rent a studio or a one-bedroom apartment in Mountain View; firefighters, police officers, and the more highly paid teachers can afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment; and probably none can afford a three-bedroom apartment unless the household has two wage-earners, and two-thirds of Mountain View's households have only one.

Policy 15. Help public-service employees find local housing.

Action 15.a Identify ways to create opportunities for first-time homebuyers, especially crucial public employees such as firefighters and police officers.

Action 15.b Give preference for acquiring or renting surplus City properties to City employees who provide essential public services.

Landbanking. Mountain View has an inventory of single-family houses and duplexes it acquired as a result of road improvement projects and by accumulating land for the civic center. The City sometimes provides housing to families who need it because of fire, flood, or other emergency, and who are referred by social service agencies. Twelve of these homes, as of 1990, were rented at below-market rates to people displaced by City projects; others were used for storage.

In 1992, Mountain View owns 5.7 acres of property that is next to residential property or might otherwise be available for housing construction. It also owns vacant lots in developed neighborhoods. City policy is to sell property as soon as possible to private owners unless the land is needed for future City use, for example, a park.

Policy 16. Return excess properties acquired by the City to the tax rolls through programs that promote housing affordability.

Action 16.a Make surplus properties available to lower-income households, moderate-income households, and first-time homebuyers, or relocate the properties for the use of these groups.

The City will develop methods to preserve affordability when the properties are resold.

Action 16.b Correlate the inventory of vacant lands with the needs of lower-income and moderate-

income households and determine whether to redesignate land for specific housing types.

Action 16.c Periodically conduct and publish an inventory of public land available for below-market-rate housing.

Housing for Special-need Groups

The elderly, the disabled, large families, and households headed by women are population sub-groups that have special needs that may not be met by the conventional housing market. The State requires city plans to look into housing for these sub-groups.

GOAL
F
Ensure a choice of housing and locations to all people regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familial status, ancestry, religion, color, or physical or mental handicaps.

Elderly. The elderly are between 10 and 12 percent of Mountain View's population. This is slightly higher than the 9.2 percent for cities in the north county and 7.5 percent for the county as a whole.

Housing for the elderly is typically one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments designed for people 62 years of age and older. It can have higher densities than family housing, primarily because older people do not own as many cars and have less need of open space. Housing for the elderly usually includes some units for the handicapped.

Relatively inexpensive land and closeness to services are the City's two most important considerations when it evaluates sites for housing for the elderly. Services include shopping, public transportation, social services, and health care. Projects should be between 50 and 100 units for efficient management, and built at densities of 20 to 50 units an acre. The City also will consider compatibility with the neighborhood, unit cost, and community acceptance. Of secondary importance are closeness to recreation and churches and the absence of detrimental conditions such as traffic, noise, and nearby industry.

Mountain View is a good place for seniors to live because it's relatively easy to use public transportation to get to services. There are four senior housing complexes in Mountain View that house about one-sixth of the senior population, but there is not enough affordable housing for seniors. Those who apply to live in senior housing face waiting periods of two to four years.



Carolyn Rollins, a resident of senior housing on Grant Road.

Subsidized Senior Housing

Name and Address	Total Subsidized Units in 1990
Central Park Apartments 90 Sierra Vista	148
Monte Vista Terrace 1101 Grant Road	150
Mountain View Apartments 460 North Shoreline	69
The Fountains 2005 San Ramon	124
Total	491

Source: City of Mountain View Planning Department

Figure 12. Subsidized Senior Housing Developments.

Policy 17. Make it easier to develop housing for seniors.

Action 17.a Encourage senior housing with centralized facilities and services or congregate care housing.

Sites for such projects have been identified in various precise plans prepared and adopted by the City. A lower parking ratio has been adopted for them. Some of these units should be "affordable."

Action 17.b Consider waiving or reducing City fees for special housing developments, such as below-market-rate family or senior housing, where waiving the fees is found to stimulate development. Investigate the effect on City finances and the affordability or feasibility of low-cost housing first.

The Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Bay Area Council all have suggested that Mountain View's fees are too burdensome for affordable housing. They recommend that the City waive or reduce certain fees in line with programs in other communities to promote affordable housing.

Handicapped Households. Seniors and the disabled need close-in, specially designed housing. Many also need lower-income affordable housing because they are on fixed incomes. The city needs more housing units with wheelchair access; the waiting period for such units is often one to two years.

Policy 18. Make it easier to develop or remodel housing for the handicapped.

Action 18.a Continue to use the Neighborhood/Housing Trust Fund to fund senior and handi-



Ramp provides easy access for those who use wheelchairs.

capped housing projects, rehabilitation, and other programs related to housing.

The City's Neighborhood/Housing Trust Fund was capitalized by a loan portfolio of approximately \$2.1 million in 1991. This money is earmarked for housing. The Trust Fund can continue to grow and supply more money for housing by increasing the number of CDBG loans and their amounts.

Large Families. Large families, those with five or more members, occupied about 5 percent of Mountain View's units in 1980. Three percent of the clients of the County Housing Authority's rental assistance program are housed in Mountain View. Large families account for 91 of these households. Of the 209 families on the waiting list for that program in 1990, 81 were large families. Sixteen of them were waiting for units with four or more bedrooms; 23 were waiting for three-bedroom units.

Female-headed Households. In 1980, a little more than 5 percent of households with children under 18 had only one parent. Eighty-one percent were headed by women; 19 percent by men. Twenty-four percent of the female-headed households were living below the poverty level. Single mothers may need financial help to keep homes purchased before their divorce. Like other families, single-parent households need outdoor play space for the children and often need more than two bedrooms. Single-parent families especially need supervised after-school activity for the children to allow the parent to work.

Non-discrimination. The City wants to assure housing opportunities for people of all economic levels with a choice of housing type and location. To help stamp out discrimination in housing, the City has regularly allocated Community Development Block Grant funds to Mid-Peninsula Citizens for Fair Housing to provide fair housing services to residents. Between 1982 and 1990, Mid-Peninsula Citizens for Fair Housing processed 1,688 inquiries that resulted in 577 investigations.

Policy 19. Prohibit discrimination in the sale, rental, and development of housing in Mountain View.

Action 19.a Maintain a discrimination complaints procedure to take housing discrimination complaints, investigate, and provide counseling.

Tenant/Property Owner Relations. Mountain View contracts with the Peninsula Area Information and Referral Service (PAAIRS) to carry out its Rental Housing Mediation Program. This program provides information and mediation services to help tenants and rental property owners resolve their disputes. PAAIRS trains mediators

and manages the program. Between 1982 and 1990, Mountain View mediators responded to 9,201 inquiries and mediated 496 cases.

Policy 20. Encourage good relations between housing providers and tenants.

Action 20.a Continue to refer rental property owner-tenant complaints to a City-funded contractor for mediation.

Homelessness

The homeless are people who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homeless people include those who are staying in temporary or emergency shelters or transitional housing or who are staying with friends or other people with the understanding that shelter is being provided as a last resort.

GOAL G

Provide temporary shelter for the homeless and those in crisis.

There are four categories of homeless people. First are the *pre-homeless*—those in danger of losing a home, such as the working poor. Second are the *houseless*—those who have lost their own shelter, are unable to find housing they can afford, and have become dependent on friends or relatives for shelter. Third are the *homeless*—those without a shelter and in need of rehabilitative help. Fourth are the *chronic homeless*—people looking for three meals and a bed, dependent on "the system."

Mountain View has between 70 and 100 single adult homeless people, who are usually transients; and about 50 homeless families, who are usually displaced from housing in the city. In total, Mountain View needs housing for 200 to 400 homeless people, counting several people for each family. It is not easy to get an accurate count because there are people who live in hotels until their money runs out near the end of the month, then become homeless for a time. The Mountain View Community Services Agency reports that about 30 percent of the 70 to 80 Mountain View people served in their soup kitchen each night are homeless; about three-quarters are single men; and the rest are families, primarily families headed by women.

The homeless are often accommodated in transitional housing, emergency shelters, and single-room-occupancy hotels.

Transitional housing is provided to the homeless for an extended time, often as long as 18 months. It is usually

combined with other social services and counseling programs to help the homeless become self-sufficient by getting a job and a permanent home. Between 1986 and 1990, Mountain View funded four transitional shelters with a capacity to house 18 people and two families at one time.

Emergency shelters give immediate and short-term beds and supplemental services to the homeless, including food, counseling, and access to other social programs. An optimum shelter size is 20 to 40 beds. Mountain View appropriated \$25,000 in general funds and almost \$91,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to three emergency shelter programs.

Policy 21. Recognize that it is necessary and important to temporarily house the homeless, battered spouses, and others in crisis.

Action 21.a Continue to monitor statistics from police, County agencies, and private organizations regarding emergency shelter needs. Encourage, cooperate with, and financially and otherwise support public and private efforts to respond to those needs.

The Planning Department has been monitoring statistics on the need for emergency shelter. It is imperative that the City encourage private efforts that will provide this shelter. Among other things, the City can lease or sell land or buildings or both at less than full market value to organizations that will operate the shelter and provide associated services. It also can assure a simple and speedy process for any zoning approvals and building permits that may be needed.

Action 21.b Specify six sites in the city on which to develop emergency shelters and transitional housing for 50 percent of the established need.

The City owns three properties that could be used to house three families and will look into the suitability, improvement costs, funding sources, and other factors for each of these properties and look for more sites. Mountain View can provide up to 30 units of transitional housing and emergency shelter by 1995, according to its estimates. The National Guard Armory may be also available for emergency shelter. The Los Altos/Mountain View Ministers Association is operating a shelter by rotating its location among several churches.

Action 21.c Continue to fund or support the Emergency

Housing Consortium and the Community Services Agency.

The Community Services Agency operates an emergency assistance program which provides hotel vouchers, food, and other necessities for Mountain View's homeless. It is also working with the Los Altos/Mountain View Ministers Association on its emergency shelter. The Emergency Housing Consortium, which helps house Mountain View's homeless, has a shelter in Santa Clara.

Action 21.d Give priority in processing for City design review and permit approval to affordable housing, emergency shelters, and transitional housing.

Affordable housing has a high priority and deserves preferential treatment. Priority processing could make this housing more affordable because up-front costs would be carried for a shorter time. Mountain View often funds carrying costs for affordable housing through Community Development Block Grants. This money would have more leverage because it would be tied up for a shorter time during permit processing.

Action 21.e Mobilize a joint task force from Mountain View and Los Altos and also invite surrounding cities to address homelessness issues in those cities and to propose solutions to their respective city councils.

Many efforts in support of the homeless stem from organizations from Mountain View and Los Altos, such as the Community Services Agency, the Churches Committee on Homelessness, and the Los Altos/Mountain View Ministers Association, so a joint approach to dealing with homelessness in these two cities is appropriate.

HOUSING QUALITY

High quality housing in good condition is important to the community and to the character of the city's neighborhoods. The City always seeks to improve the condition of its housing and to enhance the residential quality and character of Mountain View.

Mountain View recognizes that older sections of the community should be maintained and upgraded, so it will

continue to offer low-cost rehabilitation loans and will seek the cooperation of local lending institutions to finance structural improvements. The City will try through its development approval process to ensure that the community character, housing quality, physical environment, and visual environment are improved and that energy-conservation features are incorporated into the design of residential developments and single-family houses.

GOAL



Improve the condition of the housing in the city.

Rehabilitation and Replacement

Mountain View grew rapidly after World War II, so most of its housing was built in the 1950s or later and is relatively new. Only 5.1 percent of the city's housing was built before 1939.

Mountain View uses its Community Development Block Grant funds to offer loans at below-market interest rates to low-income households to make substantial renovations to their homes. As of 1990, Mountain View had \$900,000 in outstanding rehabilitation loans. About 10 owner-occupied units are rehabilitated each year. The City inspects 3,000 to 4,000 multiple-family units a year for housing code deficiencies and requires that deficiencies that are discovered be corrected.

Mountain View sets annual targets for the CDBG money it spends to carry out General Plan and housing actions. The City will specifically examine using this money for single-room-occupancy hotels, conducting the land inventory, helping in the equity financing of at-risk units, rehabilitating housing including non-conforming housing, relocating City-owned housing or reusing it or both,

assisting non-profit housing corporations, and assisting affordable housing for the elderly.

Policy 22. Continue the housing rehabilitation program and expand it.

Action 22.a Apply for Community Development Block Grant funds to rehabilitate an average of 10 houses each year.

Action 22.b Continue to identify target areas where housing needs rehabilitation.

Planning and housing staff note areas of the city that show signs of deterioration. The Neighborhoods Division staff uses established criteria to determine the neighborhoods and the areas within them to target for rehabilitation. The staff also sponsors an information campaign about the housing rehabilitation program.

Action 22.c Continue the Housing Rehabilitation Program to assist lower-income and moderate-income homeowners.

Mountain View will continue to use CDBG funds to help lower-income people retain safe and affordable housing and to stop neighborhood deterioration by making home repair and improvement easier. Lower-income applicants will continue to receive priority over moderate-income applicants. The program offers a sliding scale of interest rates with the lowest rate offered to those earning 50 per cent or less of median income and the highest rate paid by those earning more than 120 percent of median income.

Dwelling Unit Age					
Date Constructed	Average Age	Renter Occupied		Owner Occupied	
1981-1989	5	(est.)1,207	(42%)	(est.)1,474	(58%)
1975-1980	12	955	(42%)	1,344	(58%)
1970-1974	17	3,227	(72%)	1,227	(28%)
1960-1969	25	7,723	(76%)	2,415	(23%)
1940-1959	40	5,327	(58%)	3,859	(42%)
1939 or earlier	50+	791	(56%)	612	(43%)
Total		19,230	(64%)	10,931	(36%)
				30,161	

Source: City of Mountain View and U.S. Census, 1980. Figures do not include mobile homes.

Figure 13. Dwelling Units by Year of Construction.

Policy 23. Permit and encourage the selective rehabilitation of non-conforming housing.

Action 23.a Facilitate rehabilitation of non-conforming housing on a case-by-case basis.

Mountain View evaluates changes to non-conforming structures through Site Plan and Architectural Review to assure the health, safety, and welfare of the community; to maintain the neighborhood character; and to enhance the desirability of mixed-use developments.

Governmental and Other Constraints on Housing

Several factors can constrain, or limit, housing construction. Governmental factors include the availability and cost of public facilities, land use controls, City codes and enforcement, permit fees, on-site and off-site improvements, and park land dedication fees. These constrain housing only slightly in Mountain View. Non-governmental factors are the cost of constructing housing and the availability of financing. These constrain housing greatly.

Policy 24. Maintain and improve housing in the city to meet health, safety, and fire standards.

Action 24.a Continue to improve the current, simple and efficient level of planning and permit approval and building inspection service, while continuing to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Mountain View's development review procedures were found to be among the speediest in the Bay Area by a 1990 management consultant study of the Planning Department. The City should always seek ways to improve its service to the public by clearly and simply informing the public about development requirements, by making the review process as efficient as possible, and by evaluating if regulation is the most effective way of dealing with a problem. Protecting the overall community health, welfare, and safety remains the key focus of development regulation and review.

Action 24.b Study the effects of initiating a program of inspections of single-family rental housing to assure that minimum safety standards are met.

The study will determine whether inspections should be on a regular schedule or by complaint, what will be needed in terms of staffing and financing, whether the program will be able to recapture its costs through fees, and whether the fees or the resulting home improvements will have the potential to increase the cost of rental housing in Mountain View.

Utility Hookups. Water and sewer hookups do not constrain the housing market in Mountain View; they are available to all the sites in the land inventory. In 1990 the hookup costs for each new housing unit averaged \$1,380 to \$1,580. This included \$450 for sanitary sewer, \$300 to \$500 for storm drain, and \$630 for water.

Land Use Controls. Overall, land use controls and codes do not constrain the construction of affordable housing in Mountain View. The City does not have to rezone land or raise densities to meet ABAG's targets. Mountain View has used precise plans and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to make it easier for developers to build higher-density housing and mixed-use housing, which are generally less expensive, and has encouraged housing in a wide range of densities and types.

Low density housing translates to single-family detached houses. Medium density housing usually means single-family detached houses at the lower end of the range and townhouses at the upper end. High density means apartments and special housing for the elderly.

Zoning possibilities range from single-family, with a maximum density of 5.5 units per acre, to multiple-family, normally with a maximum density of 40 units or 72 people per acre. The Thoroughfare Commercial designation allows mixed-use development and up to 43

Residential Land Use Designations		
Designation	Dwelling Units per Acre	Persons per Acre
Low	1-6	2-13
Mobile Home Park	7-14	15-30
Medium-low	7-12	15-26
Medium-high	13-30	27-64
High	31-80	66-170

Figure 14. General Plan Residential Land Use Designations.



Low density (single-family) housing.



Medium-low density housing.



Medium-high density housing.



High density housing.

dwelling units per acre. Mountain View has allowed still higher residential densities in precise plans for multiple-family housing and for housing for the elderly. In addition, there are two special zones—R3-d, which allows up to 51 units per acre, and P, which allows up to 80 units per acre. Mountain View has approved these higher densities where the higher density can be shown to be compatible with the neighborhood and there are adequate facilities.

Building Codes. Building codes have not constrained residential development. Mountain View requires new construction to meet the Uniform Building Code regulations, but it has no significant requirements above and beyond the code.

The various building codes generally give some discretion to allow for modification of standards to fit special cases. Application of new technology or different standards in special cases needs to be carefully evaluated to make sure that the revision does not compromise public safety and long-term effectiveness, including financial effectiveness. However, flexibility and openness to new ways of building, consistent with the overall objectives of safety and effectiveness, is encouraged.

Zoning. Zoning requirements do not constrain residential development, and neither do building setbacks, also called required yards, which are nominal.

Townhouse Design Guidelines. Mountain View established Design Guidelines for Townhouse Development

in 1990 because townhouses, a relatively new building type demanded by the market, were increasingly being built in multiple-family zones intended for apartments, stacked flats, and other high-density building types. The community was concerned that townhouses were overly large, too bulky, and had too much paving.

The guidelines do not limit the maximum density of the multiple-family zone. The guidelines do not change the underlying maximum density and development standards for higher-density building types. They only restrict one building type—townhouses—limiting them to 10 to 12 per acre in the R-3 zone. Multiple-family units other than townhouses can still be built without having to conform to the guidelines. Units of any kind in any other zone are not affected. The guidelines have a price tag, though. They raise the cost of larger townhouses suitable for families. The largest developer of townhouses in Mountain View states that the guidelines add an average of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to each unit's cost, at 1990 prices. This amounts to about 6 percent of the total cost of a townhouse.

Parking. Mountain View requires two spaces per unit for single-family houses and duplexes, and from two to two-and-a-half spaces per unit for multiple-family dwellings, depending on the unit types and other characteristics of the project. These requirements are normal for a mid-sized suburban city. Parking requirements do not constrain housing development, and some affordable housing is singled out for beneficial treatment. For example, the City allows a lower parking standard of 1.15 spaces per unit for affordable housing for the elderly. Mountain View has also allowed shared parking in mixed-use projects, which have both stores and housing, to meet the requirements for parking for guests where it could be demonstrated that peak parking demands don't overlap.

Costs of Permits. Building permit costs may constrain affordable housing. The permit to develop a 1,500-square-foot house on an infill lot in 1990 cost \$1,500. Mountain View does not waive fees for affordable housing.

In 1991, subdivision map applications cost \$1,200 plus \$40 per lot, up to a maximum fee of \$3,000, and were generally processed within 80 days. The Planning Department does not review applications for single-family developments that comply with zoning designations. Generally, the building permit and approval process is relatively simple, and takes three to five weeks.

On-site and Off-site Improvements. Residential developers must pay for connections to sewers, water mains, and storm drains, for recreation fees, and for inspections. Mountain View, like most cities in California, does not cover these costs from the general fund. In 1990, costs

averaged \$27,300 for a single-family house in a new subdivision to \$19,000 for a townhouse on an infill lot, and \$12,900 for a unit in a multiple-family project.

Park Land Dedication Fees. Mountain View's park land dedication ordinance, in effect since 1972, requires subdividers to dedicate land for a park or to pay a fee instead. Subdividers may dedicate land for a park if a park site has been designated for the property in the General Plan. They must pay a fee when the subdivision is built on land for which there is no park and none has been planned; when it is impossible, impractical, or undesirable to dedicate park land; or when the proposed subdivision has 50 units or fewer. The fee is based on the number of units and the fair market value of land in Mountain View, a formula that will assure that there are three acres of park land for every 1,000 residents. This ordinance does not apply to industrial subdivisions, conversion of buildings to non-residential condominiums, or conversion of apartment buildings that are more than five years old into condominiums.

Non-governmental Constraints. The major contributors to the ever-escalating cost of housing in Mountain View are extremely high land prices and construction costs and fluctuating interest rates. The total cost for an attached single-family house, or townhouse, in 1989 ranged from \$260,000 to \$305,000. (See Figure 15.)

Mortgage interest rates have a major effect on housing affordability. Rates have varied widely from a high near 18 percent in 1981 to a low of 9 percent in 1986 and 1991.

The City can ease the effects of higher rates by continuing to issue Mortgage Credit Certificates to first-time homebuyers. Mortgage Credit Certificates allow a homeowner an annual federal income tax credit up to 20

Estimated Townhouse Costs per Unit	
Land	\$75,000– \$85,000 / unit
Construction ((\$55–\$60 per sq. ft.)	\$90,000–\$100,000 / unit
Utilities and Improvements	\$15,000– \$20,000 / unit
Other costs (Development fees, financing, etc.)	\$80,000–\$100,000 / unit
Total	\$260,000–\$305,000 / unit
Source: The Plymouth Group, Mountain View.	

Figure 15. Estimated Townhouse Costs, 1989.

percent of mortgage interest paid during the year. From 1988 to 1990, 244 of these certificates were issued in Mountain View.

Creditworthy buyers of residential property and buildings have always been able to get mortgage financing in Mountain View. There are no Mountain View neighborhoods in which brokers or banks will not make mortgage loans, and there are no areas singled out for more careful review or required to pay higher than standard rates.

Energy Conservation

About 35 percent of Mountain View's houses are over 30 years old and are not as energy-efficient as newer housing. During the winter, they use above-average amounts of gas and electricity, making them less affordable by adding extra energy costs. Older houses often lack attic and wall insulation, weather stripping, caulking, and storm windows. Adding those and placing gaskets behind electric switch plates, replacing broken window panes, and repairing window frames and sashes will effectively weatherize older houses and could markedly decrease energy consumption and housing costs.

Pacific Gas & Electric has several programs designed for low-income and elderly people to improve the efficiency of housing units and offers a 15 percent discount to qualifying needy households. The programs include general insulation, energy assessments, and the sale of energy-efficient refrigerators and insulation covers for water heaters. The City will work with PG&E to develop educational programs or loan programs or both to help homeowners to adapt their houses to make use of solar energy for water and space heating and air-conditioning and for overall energy efficiency.

Policy 25. Promote energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive residential development, remodeling, and rehabilitation.

Actions to carry out this Policy are contained in the Environmental Management Chapter, in the Solar Access section. These actions to incorporate solar access into residential projects will cause a nominal increase in the initial cost of a new house, but the expense will be offset by reduced energy costs over time. When it develops the guidelines, the City will take care to assure that building af-



Children playing at Rengstorff Park reflect cultural diversity.



Sylvan Park, a focal point for the neighborhood.

fordable units will not be discouraged by requirements for using solar energy and will consider exemptions for affordable units.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are the foundation of the city. Strong, healthy neighborhoods are vital to the overall well-being of the community. A neighborhood is a group of homes that share some common identity because of location, building style, density, or the people who live there. Two kinds of characteristics—psychological and physical—give meaning to the term “neighborhood.”

Neighborhoods give people a sense of belonging, of comfort, and of refuge. They allow people to connect with their neighbors informally, to meet others casually, to share interests, and to experience the diversity of cultures, ages, and ways of living that add to the richness of the community. Some neighborhoods are very well defined with formal boundaries and organized associations. Other neighborhoods have only a few of these characteristics, but are still recognizable as being different from surrounding residential areas.

This Plan has five residential designations which provide a variety of quiet, comfortable, and safe neighborhoods. Physically, neighborhood characteristics include a “walkable” area, a mixture of uses that relate to one another—for example, housing and a neighborhood shopping center—and a focal point like a school or park that gives identity to an area. Definitions for these designations and their allowable densities are described in

the Land Use Map section of the Community Development Chapter.

Mountain View recognizes the importance of creating and enhancing neighborhoods. Good neighborhoods allow people a widening circle of contacts, from individual to family, to neighborhood, to community. Neighborhoods help people take the important step from individual to city-wide involvement.

G O A L Maintain and enhance the quality and character of Mountain View's neighborhoods.

Protecting and Enhancing Neighborhoods

Each neighborhood in Mountain View has a distinct character, depending on when it was built, the style and mixture of homes, and where it is located. Preserving the individual character of the city's neighborhoods is an important concern for Mountain View residents. The City has responded by developing specific programs to promote good design and compatibility in the city's single-family and multiple-family neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Participation. Mountain View has three formally organized neighborhoods, each represented by a neighborhood association. These associations allow the residents to deal with problems that affect their particular neighborhood in an organized, close-knit manner that reflects neighborhood interests and priorities.

- The Monta Loma Neighborhood Association covers the single-family neighborhood surrounding Monta Loma School. Formed in 1977, it is Mountain View's oldest neighborhood organization.
- The Blackfield Neighborhood Association covers the area between El Camino and Los Altos, westerly of El Monte Avenue. This association, which began in 1989, has already been effective in negotiating for a new mini-park.
- The third and newest association is the Old Downtown Mountain View Neighborhood Association. It formed in 1989 in reaction to traffic problems affecting Downtown. It has gone on to develop a comprehensive plan for strengthening the identity of the neighborhood, including plans for a new mini-park, design guidelines for neighborhood architecture, improved street lighting, and traffic control measures. This plan was adopted by the City Council in 1991 and will be used to plan future City and private improvements in the area.

Other neighborhoods have become active in specific issues but have not ended up forming an association.

- The Farley-Burgoyne neighborhood, bounded by those two streets, organized informally to seek City ordinances to control front-yard litter and excessive parking.
- Neighborhoods south of El Camino have organized to support keeping neighborhood schools, especially the areas around Cooper School and Bubbs School.
- The Whisman neighborhood is diverse, including everything from single-family homes on large and small lots to apartments at densities up to about 40 units per acre. It has not organized as a total neighborhood, but sections have grouped to support the Whisman School and Slater School and to explore City design control to deal with the rapid growth of new housing in the area.

The City can help guide residents in coordinating their activities to deal with neighborhood issues if the residents wish. Such coordinated efforts are usually more effective in solving problems than individual actions would be. To improve the dialogue between the City and the neighborhoods, the City Council has a special committee, the Council Neighborhoods Committee, to deal with neighborhood issues. This committee generally meets monthly to discuss issues that affect residential areas of the city such as parking, front yard appearance, housing assistance programs, and residential Zoning Ordinance requirements. The Neighborhoods Committee encourages neighborhood groups to host meetings to hear directly from the residents about issues and possible solutions affecting that area.

Neighborhood associations can also effectively and efficiently substitute for more legalistic City government action. For example, neighborhood associations can use block meetings and peer pressure to correct neighborhood problems rather than seek City adoption and enforcement of ordinances to deal with neighborhood concerns. A neighborhood approach can be better tailored to resolving the particular problems of an area than can city-wide government action.

Policy 26 Support neighborhood associations.

Action 26.a Update and publish the Neighborhood Handbook.

Action 26.b Assist neighborhood groups to form neighborhood associations.

Action 26.c Assist neighborhood associations to develop comprehensive neighborhood plans.

Community Balance. It is important that actions to support neighborhoods are in balance with efforts to enhance and strengthen the community as a whole. Neighborhoods tend to be developed and planned one at a time, complementing the community as it continues, evolves, and changes, but it is important that the entire community is recognized as the City of Mountain View. Neighborhood planning and action efforts should upgrade that neighborhood, but also should recognize the values of adjacent neighborhoods and of the city as a whole.

Policy 27 Balance the needs of individual neighborhoods with the needs of other neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Action 27.a Use the annual Capital Improvements Program and City operations budget process to balance neighborhood and City budget needs.

The Capital Improvements Program and the City's Annual Budget for operations are the methods the City uses to allocate resources to the various competing needs of the City. Neighborhood programs should be part of this process.

Action 27.b Include neighborhood funding mechanisms as part of neighborhood plans for localized services and facilities.

Services and facilities that benefit one group only and not the general population should be, at least in part, paid for by the group that gets the benefit. General, city-wide funding methods should be used to pay for city-wide services or to mitigate the effects of City-sponsored activities. Sometimes the costs will be shared; for example, the City paying for a basic level of service and the neighborhood paying for an improved level that fits its particular circumstances.

Neighborhood Design. Mountain View has many different kinds of neighborhoods, some very uniform and others that have a variety of housing types. Each neighborhood requires programs tailored to its individual character and opportunities. The City uses the development approval process to be sure that Mountain View's community character, housing quality, and physical and visual environment are improved. The City set a maximum floor area ratio of 0.45 when residents expressed concern about increasingly large, new single-family houses in 1986. These FARs were amended in 1991 to provide greater flexibility with special design effort while protecting neighborhood character. Mountain View also requires

Site Plan and Architectural Review for non-standard developments. The City has development guidelines for flag lots and has eliminated the two-acre minimum size for Planned Unit Developments to make it easier to develop deep, narrow, infill lots.

Several City programs aggressively target neighborhood improvement. Ordinances cover parking and placement of recreational vehicles and other large vehicles, storage of rubbish, equipment, machinery, and other items in front and side yards visible from the street; graffiti; and other conditions that debase the appearance of property.

The Planning Department's code enforcement officer is responsible for abating illegal businesses in residences and dealing with other zoning enforcement issues. The City's active Neighborhood Improvement Program includes special clean-up and fix-up activities, special code enforcement to remove eyesores, and concentrated public investment in street trees, mini-parks, road improvements, and the like through the Neighborhoods Division of the Planning Department.

Policy 28 Preserve and enhance the character of Mountain View neighborhoods.

Action 28.a Continue code enforcement and maintenance of public areas and neighborhoods.

In some of Mountain View's older residential neighborhoods, it is diversity—the mixture of old and new, large and small—that gives the neighborhood its character. Some neighborhoods are changing in character. New apartments and townhouses are replacing single-family houses on large lots, resulting in a patchwork of densities and housing types. Other neighborhoods are evolving as small houses are expanded or remodeled. These changes mean that housing can be kept up-to-date and people can stay in their neighborhoods. These changes also can damage the neighborhood, destroying the neighborhood character that attracted the residents in the first place. City design guidelines and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance can help ensure that additions and remodeling blend in with the positive qualities of the neighborhood.

Action 28.b Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow upgrading and expansion of single-family homes while preserving neighborhood compatibility.

Action 28.c Consider design standards for historic neighborhoods that are intended to preserve the architecture and streetscape features.

Mountain View has adopted a Downtown Neighborhood Preservation and Improve-

ment Plan to establish design guidelines, traffic controls, and a public improvement program for the historic Downtown neighborhood. This plan was initiated by residents concerned about preserving the special character of their neighborhood.

While many of Mountain View's neighborhoods are diverse, they still have a cohesive character that identifies them as a neighborhood. Design and land use policies should be sensitive to this variety.

Other neighborhoods in Mountain View are more uniform with similar densities, housing styles, and housing sizes. In the city's single-family neighborhoods, large-scale infill development or large additions to houses can dwarf surrounding homes and disrupt the neighborhood character. Size limits can preserve the open feeling and character of a neighborhood.

Action 28.d Establish design and development guidelines to encourage compatibility between neighboring developments.

Incompatible densities and building design can detract from multiple-family residential neighborhoods. The City's design review process makes multiple-family residential developments more compatible with each other and helps those single-family projects that vary from standard zoning regulations fit into their neighborhoods. Measures to promote better neighborhood identity and incentives for upgrading older buildings need to be developed. General rules or guidelines that enhance compatibility while still promoting other City goals, including providing affordable housing and a variety of housing types, also are needed.

Action 28.e Identify ways to encourage redevelopment or rehabilitation or both of older apartment houses that are showing serious signs of deterioration and creating neighborhood blight.

The City has several programs that help rehabilitate single-family housing, but none that target multiple-family development. State or other funds may be available to carry out a multiple-family development rehabilitation program.

Action 28.f Continue to support the efforts of neighborhood associations to improve neighborhood character and housing quality.

The City has several programs that support neighborhood planning efforts through

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neighborhood clean-up campaigns, the Council Neighborhoods Committee, and neighborhood studies.

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Action 28.g Use the multiple-family rental housing inspection program to ensure compliance with the Uniform Housing Code's health and safety standards.

Mountain View has inspected all apartment complexes of three or more units for basic health and safety conditions under the Uniform Housing Code since the late 1970s. The program, which conducts inspections on a rotating five-year cycle, helps keep the housing stock from deteriorating and improves living conditions. Ensuring the continued quality of each complex helps maintain the quality of all multiple-family housing.

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